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SUBMISSION TO FLINDERS UNIVERSITY TO CONTINUE PAID FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

The Independent Review team
Flinders University
Sturt Rd, Bedford Park, South Australia 5042

Via email: FDVLeaveReview@flinders.edu.au

5 June 2024

Dear Review Team,

Re: Review of the Fair Work Amendment (Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Act 2022

My name is Catherine Gander, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of DV West. DV West consists of around 32 staff, and provides domestic violence support services in the Penrith/Nepean, Blue Mountains, Blacktown/Hills and Hawkesbury district. DV West have been delivering DV specialist services since 1981 and consist of five women's refuges, transitional houses and outreach services. DV West provides flexible support and resources to enable women and children experiencing or escaping domestic and family violence to prevent future violence in their lives.

I am writing to show support for continuing the legislation in its current form. DV West has been a supporter of the Campaign for Paid Domestic Violence Leave from the start. We believe this Bill provides women escaping from or living with violent perpetrators an opportunity to access safe options for themselves and their children, without the fear of loss of employment and income which can impact their ability to provide for themselves and/or children.

Through our frontline workers, DV West has collected positive feedback from clients who used Paid DFV Leave. For several women who were assisted through our services, Paid DFV Leave assisted them in leaving their abusive partners while maintaining some financial security and stability. This is especially important when women have children. It also helps addressing the taboos around DFV and creating more awareness and understanding amongst employers. I am including some of the feedback from our workers here to reinforce our support (de-identified):

DV WEST NEPEAN

For Women
& Children

DV WEST BLACKTOWN/HILLS

For Women without
Accompanying Children

DV WEST WIRRAWEE GUNYA

For Aboriginal
Women & Children

DV WEST BLUE MOUNTAINS

For Women
& Children

DV WEST AFTER HOURS

After Hours
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- “I have had 2 women access the paid DV leave and they both had no issues accessing this. Their biggest hurdle was to actually request the leave, as their managers didn’t know they were going through DV. But both women said their managers have been very supportive.”
- “I supported an older woman client say she wished the Leave had been around years ago and she would not have had to wait until she is 75 to leave her violent husband.”
- For one client, who was not an Australian citizen and therefore had no Centrelink or other Government entitlements, through Paid DV Leave she was able to take leave the next day after requesting it with her manager. She was able to move house without worrying about interruptions to her income. She was able to return to work two weeks later.

DV West wholeheartedly supports this legislation to be continued in its current form in its entirety and urge the Independent Review Team to recommend this in its report.

Yours Sincerely,

Catherine Gander, Chief Executive Officer, DV West

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